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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes a qualitative approach called the "method of essence" for use within-depth interview projects to further understand the deeper unities of a particular phenomenon of interest, developed by K. Witz in his research and in connection with his work with doctoral students (K. Witz, D. Goodwin, R. Hart, and H. Thomas, 1998). It was used by D. Goodwin in his dissertation research on the phenomenon of teacher growth (D. Goodwin, 1998). Aspects of the portrait of John, one of Goodwin's participants, are exhibited to provide a specific case where the method was used to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of growth in a teacher, expressed as the "essence of the story of growth." The method of essence advocates the investigator's becoming increasingly aware of, sensitive to, and more able to feel the inner dimensions of the teacher in relation to the investigator's compassion for the object of study that also maintains absolute respect for the integrity, depth, and unity of the person/self. It urges the investigator to move in the direction of truth in support of the growth and realization of human potential. An attachment presents a key for reading transcribed passages from interviews. (Contains 1 figure and 27 references.) (SLD)

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The Method of Essence in the Study of Teacher Growth: Presentation of a Specific Case

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The Method of Essence in the Study of Teacher Growth: Presentation of a Specific Case

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Abstract

This paper summarizes a qualitative approach called the "method of essence" for use with in-depth interview projects to further understand the deeper unities of a particular phenomenon of interest, developed by K. Witz in his research and in connection with his work with doctoral students (Witz, Goodwin, Hart, and Thomas 1998). It was employed by Goodwin in his dissertation research on the phenomenon of teacher growth (Goodwin 1998). Aspects of the portrait of John, one of Goodwin's participants, are exhibited to provide a specific case where the method was used to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of growth in a teacher, expressed as the "essence of the story of growth."

Introduction

In this paper we (1) briefly characterize the method of essence in one-on-one interview projects in connection with the in-depth study of the phenomenon of teacher growth (Goodwin, 1998; Witz, Goodwin, Hart, and Thomas 1998), and (2) present the major elements of the essence of the story of growth in the portrait of John, an experienced elementary and middle school teacher who recently became an elementary school assistant principal. This work is developed in part from Goodwin's doctoral dissertation research on the personal and professional growth of teachers involved in collaborative educational action research projects (Goodwin, 1998) and from the research of Klaus Witz.

In the dissertation research portraits were developed based on the analysis of multiple in-depth interviews with each of four teachers which explored and plumbed the depths of their

comprehensive growth (inner, personal, professional) against the total meaning that had been developing in their life from childhood on up to the time of the interviews. The aim was twofold: (1) to develop deep analytical insight into how the phenomenon of teacher growth was situated in the teacher in connection with his/her life as a whole; and (2) develop a portrait of the individual teacher to communicate the deep-seated coherent unified essence of growth rooted in actual life, expressed formally in the portrait as the "essence of the story of growth."

Background for the Study of Teacher Growth

Teacher growth has moved into the center of discussions on educational innovation and change (Fullan, 1995; Neufeld and Grimmett, 1994). Many have now taken the position that a source for direction in the realization of better schooling rests with teachers taking a reflective research stance on their own teaching to facilitate increases in their own awareness and professional growth (Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh, 1993; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Elliott, 1991; Feldman and Atkin, 1995; Lieberman and Miller, 1991; Stenhouse, 1975). Even though there exists a general consensus on the significance of the life of the teacher in gaining a better understanding of teacher growth and development (Fullan, 1982; Greene, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996; Goodwin, 1998, Rubin, 1989, Smith and Keith, 1971; Smith, Klein, Prunty, and Dwyer, 1986), there are few in-depth detailed studies on the overall comprehensive growth of individual teachers which also take into account a deeper understanding of their core motivations and values, their emotionality, their beliefs and philosophy, and their spirituality in relation to their classroom work and in relation to their life

as a whole, case-by-case. (For example, see Louden, 1991; Kau, 1981; McCollum, 1995; Neufeld and Grimmett, 1994; Pobre, 1996; Witz, 1978.)

Methodology

In carrying out in-depth research along these lines, this method of essence advocates the investigator becoming increasingly aware of, sensitive to, and more able to feel the inner dimensions of the teacher in relation to the investigator's compassion for the object of study (here, teacher growth) (Witz, 1996) that also maintains absolute respect for the integrity, depth, and unity of the person/self. It urges the investigator to move in the direction of truth in support of growth and realization of human potential (Constas, 1998). This approach includes "a contemplative emphasis both in conducting the interview and during analysis, an emphasis on sympathetic sharing the feeling state and state of mind of the subject, a commitment to seeing the phenomenon "as it is" and seeing its "nature" and "essence" (so a commitment to seeing unity), and the conceptual-imaginal shaping of what is intuitively perceived" (Witz, et al., 1998, p. 6). It advocates then a sympathetic and empathetic identification with the participant in order to correctly understand the microanalytic nuances that are actually present during the interview process itself and in listening back to the audio taped record.

The Interview Approach

With John, four one and one-half hour audio-taped interviews were carried out with the aim of developing a genuine trusting collaborative investigative relationship (Reason 1994): to be like a friend in co-contemplation of his growth, with serious attention given to his inner or

subjective categories of meaning and/or experiential unities, specific memories, formative experiences, etc. and how things cohere in him, without the use of jargon. There was a deliberate ongoing effort to analyze each interview in terms of (1) basic impressions, (2) intuitive awareness of coherence and holism, (3) emergent themes revealed during the interview process, and (4) in terms of a developing image, shape, intuitive grasp, and feeling for John's comprehensive growth in his life. Working to comprehend microanalytic nuances in discourse with John made possible fundamental insights into John's growth which became the foundation for the essence of growth in his case. From this general position, the life historical/biographical aspects that came to light during the interviews served as guides for further investigation and analysis, and served to keep aspects of the emerging essence of the bigger story in the proper proportions. Every effort then was made to tailor the interview process and ongoing analysis to John at ever more holistic and fundamental levels. In principle, all interview work is aimed to unfurl a true accounting of growth (or of the object of study) in the life of the teacher (or individual) in the midst of respect, trust, and mutual understanding.

Working with this process in John's case, there arose the awareness/knowledge in Goodwin (in discussion with Witz) that deeper levels of goodness and feelings of fulfillment were operating in John's life as a whole to somehow sustain and enhance his growth and development which could only be understood as a unified state of being, a single coherent form of inner growth.

The Portrait of John

The description that follows is a brief excerpt from the portrait of John which is forty-five pages in length and is structured in his case so that the twenty-three page "essence of the story of growth" is centered in the portrait. The essence is preceded by an introduction which summarizes John's background and life growing up and is followed by examples of his current way of working which is brought into relation with the essence of the story of growth.

John, now in his mid-thirties, grew up in a Midwest suburb with his older brother, his mother who worked at home, and his father who worked in retail sales. John loved sports, especially basketball and baseball, he was outgoing, and due to his love of sports, he said, he developed early in his life an attitude to always try his best. While John went through a period in middle school where he described himself as a "jerk," a vision of himself helping children get over their fears and becoming a teacher when he was an assistant to a swimming teacher just before his ninth grade school year changed all that, and in high school he became a "model student." After graduating college as a certified teacher k-8, John taught at a local Catholic elementary school for three years before coming to St. Louis where he eventually married and began a family. In the years since, John has taught in a high school for troubled adolescents, at an adolescent treatment center for sexual and physical abuse, he completed a Master's Degree in Educational Administration, taught for an additional three years (first, seventh, and eighth grade, all in the same school), and is now an assistant principal in an elementary school (k-5). In the following section are excerpts from Goodwin (1998) to suggest the essence of the story of growth for John. A key for reading the quoted passages is included at the end of the paper.

Essence of the Story of Growth

The essence of the story of growth in John is the natural expansion, self-distillation, and actualization of himself. In his early teens, he realized he would be fulfilled through helping children overcome their fear of learning and thereafter he became more purposive and goal-directed. Over the years, his life has become more aligned to the intensification of his compassion and of his capacity for caring, along with the growth of a penetrating and clarifying reflective consciousness. In the distillation of John's awakening inner intelligence is a deeper meaning of the importance of his work in the life-learning of others in relation to his spreading awareness of unity and harmony in his life. The inner clarification brought about by the distillation process inherent in John's expanding/spreading awareness has enabled a brighter and stronger emanation of a deeper core, or essence, of good feeling/fulfillment, which has infused his growing vision of the human being and his work as an educator. There have been increases in his capacity to connect with the students he is working with, and to collaborate with them on bringing to their awareness "strengths" which "can affect their whole life." His potentiality for caring and compassion has been amplified and intensified to such an extent that now he can "really help kids" by empowering them to become more independent, self-knowledgeable, and self-confident learners. In this way, the essence of the story of growth is John coming into sustained self-distillation of inner development/intelligence toward higher realms of the Self.

We can see this essence in three incidents in John's life that are so deep, transformative, and rich that they allow us to zero in on fundamental aspects of whom John is. In figure 1 is a sketch of the general shape of the growth story. First is the realization by John that he wants to be a teacher when he gets a job as an assistant to help with swimming lessons just before the

ninth grade. John came to be more in touch with a deep feeling of goodness/fulfilment with this realization and he became more goal-directed, his understanding of his own development more purposive. The inmost levels of feeling which were inspired to grow and to come into awareness in the swimming pool that day, like a seed that suddenly begins to germinate, gets nourished and amplified over the next eighteen years. Second is the experience John has with an eighth grade student of his, Jacob (not his real name), using interview and evaluation methods he learned participating in the Individual Dynamic Evaluation of the Ability to Learn (I.D.E.A.L.) Teacher Professional Development Program where John suddenly understood how Jacob's mind worked naturally and how this knowledge could be used to improve Jacob's school learning. With this experience there was further growth in John of an inner intelligence/awareness which clarified, simultaneously fused with, and further enabled his compassion and caring. His view of the child was enlarged as was his educational vision. John grasped the real meaning of empowerment in educational relationships. Third, during the third interview John talked about the significance of the work he was doing then and how it "can change their whole life." In John's growth was an experience of a larger and fuller awareness of wholeness — a true harmonious expression of meaningfulness and empowerment as a fact in his life.

Each of these experiences was transformative for John in the sense of his becoming more enabled to help others learn and grow. There developed an inner clarification and a greater actualization of his potentiality for helping, empowering, and liberating others that was permanent and fundamental. These were pivotal experiences from which we are able to see that essence of natural expansion of inner clarity, depth, and capability over a period of twenty years.

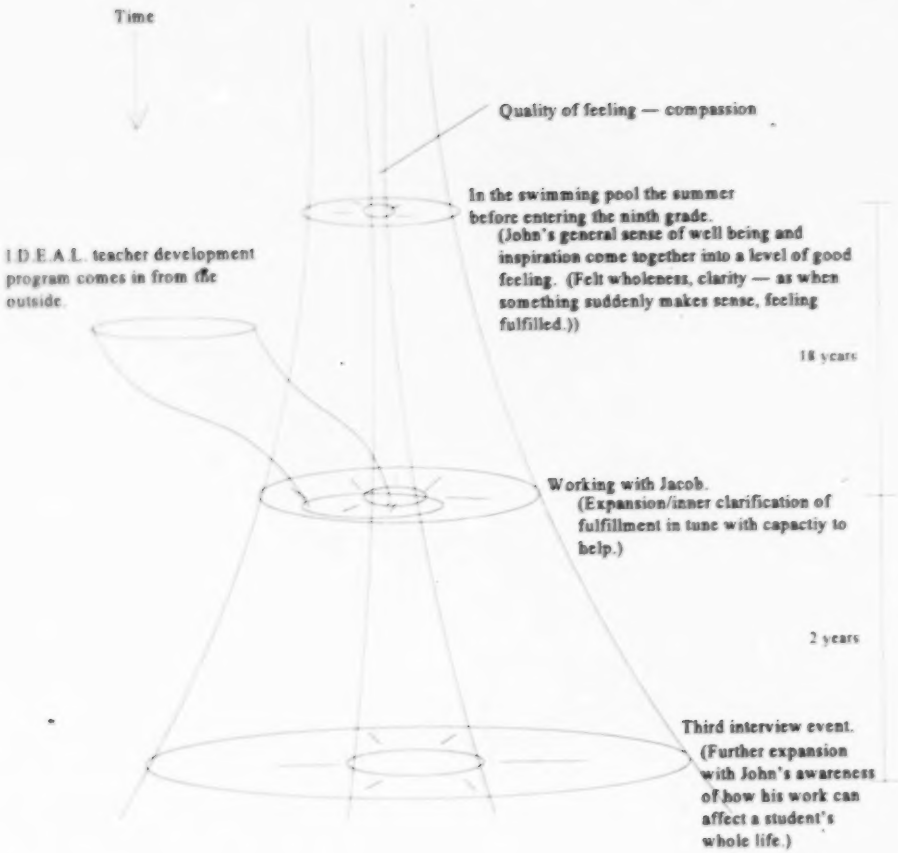
Time
Quality of feeling — compassion
In the swimming pool the summer before entering the ninth grade.
(John's general sense of well being and inspiration come together into a level of good feeling. (Felt wholeness, clarity — as when something suddenly makes sense, feeling fulfilled.))
18 years
I.D.E.A.L. teacher development program comes in from the outside.
Working with Jacob.
(Expansion/inner clarification of fulfillment in tune with capactiy to help.)
2 years
Third interview event.
(Further expansion with John's awareness of how his work can affect a student's whole life.)

Figure 1 Sketch of John's growth as expansion./distillation using three events.

Teaching Swimming in the Ninth Grade

Toward the end of the summer, right before John was about to begin the ninth grade, he started a job at the neighborhood pool assisting with swimming lessons for five and six year old's because, "Working at the pool was a cool job to have." John's role as the assistant was to position himself in the pool about 10 to 15 feet from the edge; the children would swim out to him one at a time; he would say, "Good job," and send them back to where the teacher was. During his ninth grade school year, he took the Water Safety Instruction Classes to become a certified lifeguard and swimming teacher.

> *(a)* **J:** ... and <you know> just (quickly, excitedly) teaching them how to swim right off the bat. (takes a breath) And I // just loved it. I, I, I kind of surprised myself how much I loved it and how I couldn't ´wait, the next day // to go see these kids and go work with them more, and it was so great to see 'em. ´Scared of the water one day, and then <you know> a week later, they're swimming, and the ah, and how happy they are with being able to swim. **(D:** Um-huh.) // (with voice quickening) And I thought, " ´This is / what I want to do. I, I just can't ´wait to wake up in the morning, and get, **(D:** No kidding. Oh.) and get to the pool, and swimming with these kids." And I thought, "That's, // that's what I want my job to be. A job that I ´wake up in the morning and I look forward to going to work. And if working with kids is it, then that's what I want to do." // So, // that's what got me into education . . . (1-1-200)

It was an exhilarating experience for John to get to the pool to help the children get over their fear of the water and learn how to swim. He shared and reveled in their joy. The awareness that came to him that day when he knew he wanted to be a teacher was nourished in his teaching swimming to the children and became the direction to go with his life. Helping the children get into the water by being patient and naturally compassionate toward their hesitation and uncertainty, the gladness he felt as they conquered fear together, served to bring into greater relief John's budding deeper self.

In the above passage, the way John talked about his working with the children to remove fear, instructing them in the necessary swimming skills, and their experiencing the success of that involved a level of good feeling/fulfillment that was fused with his words suggesting a clear unified entity in John. In talking about his experiences in the pool John became immersed in the whole experiential as a unified level of good feeling/memory that was present then. There is from him a beautiful love-filled phrase where John speaks directly out of this feeling/memory state like it happened just yesterday: the voice drops slightly, coming quickly into a fuller vibratory level with smooth transitions -- pouring out all at once; his voice begins to shift downward on "the next day," then there is a one second pause followed by these words, perfectly tuned -- "*to go see these kids and go work with them more, and it was so great to see 'em. Scared of the water one day, and then <you know> a week later, they're swimming, and the ah, and how happy they are being able to swim.*" These words emanated from the completely coherent unity of the level of good feeling/memory that comprises a core of fulfilment that is in intimate concert with John's compassion. Next, John's voice quickens with, "And I thought, this is / what I want to do." With this reflection, and the likeness in tone and flow between the way John says, "this is / what I want to do," and "And I // just loved it," we see that a deep level of good feeling/fulfilment is affirmed and completely integrated with the direction of his life and career. This brief analysis suggests a central inner core of good feeling/fulfilment in harmony with compassion and caring that has been made visible, and which has its roots in the experience of being in the pool that day when John decided that he wanted to play a larger role in children's lives and become a teacher.

Working with Jacob

John talked in some detail about Jacob, an 8th grader he worked with during his first year with the I.D.E.A.L. Program, whom he had gotten to know in his 7th grade class the year earlier. Jacob was one of five students who had moved up grade level with him so he "really got to know" some of his students. John first brought up his work with Jacob in the context of talking about how, with looping, "you could just take off" with kids.

> *(b)* **J:** Kinda, after nine months you feel like, (voice lowers with more intensity) "Man I really know these kids." I really know them as learners, as people, // I know 'em. And if you had, <if you had> another year with them, // wow! . . . I had kids who // <you know> just said, I, I never knew that, a kid who had, // Uhm, amazing ability in art. I had a student who ah, great art student, and he said, ah, struggling in Social Studies, came in and he said ah, "For two weeks," he goes, "Mr. *****, I'm study'in, I'm study'in, I'm study'in." "Okay, great." He takes the test and gets a 64. // I said, // (voice lowers to an intense whisper) "Oh my God!" So I did some work with him . . . " (1-1-100)

John had decided to "evaluate" Jacob the way he had been trained in I.D.E.A.L. during the previous summer's workshop, parts of which involved interviewing the child on a number of hands-on problem solving activities, including Piagetian tasks like conservation using balls of clay, and visualization tasks, like "the tower." (See figure 2.)

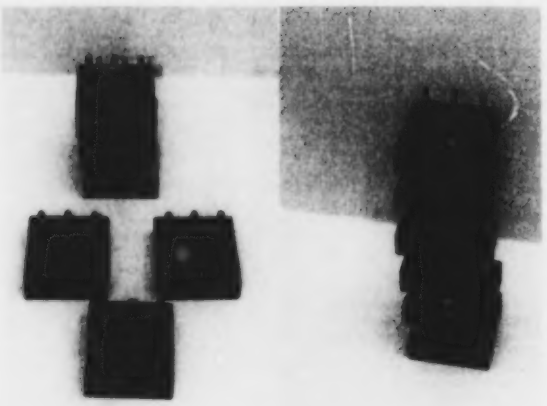

Figure 2. Blocks with pegs that are stacked into a tower.

John brought out a black box containing "the tower" and showed it to me. The task is to memorize the position of the 'glued-in-peg' in each of six blocks, nine pegs per block, all painted black, and then memorize the configuration made from the six blocks as they are stacked on top of one another, (one 'glued-in-peg' per block, e.g., 'left middle,' 'top right,' with the rest loose and not glued in, yet the fit is snug enough so that there are no visual cues as to which peg is 'glued-in'). Once stacked, the positioning of the blocks in relation to each other, and hence the configuration of the 'glued-in-pegs,' remains constant. Then, from the base position (the starting point from the child's point of view), the tower is rotated 90 degrees clockwise. The task is now to re identify the different positions of the 'glued-in-pegs, starting from the bottom of the tower and working up to the sixth block on the top, (e.g., at base position: the 'glued-in-peg' is at bottom left from the child's perspective; after a 90-degree rotation clockwise: the 'glued-in peg' is at top left from the child's point of view).

After Jacob had learned the base position for all six blocks, which John said was difficult even for him at first, Jacob was able to locate the 'glued-in-pegs' in all six stacked blocks after a 90-degree rotation, then after a 180-degree rotation, a 270-degree rotation, finally coming full circle with no problem! John was astounded.

> *(c)* **J:** ... I said, "How are you doing this?" And he said, and he said, "I'm taking, (**D:** That's amazing.) I'm taking my mental hands and I'm turning it in my mind." (John drops his pencil he was holding in his right hand emphatically onto the top of his desk, leans back in his chair, and looks at me.) (**D:** Ah, wow!) (voice lowers slightly) And I said, "Help me understand (slight laugh) what that means."
> **D:** What does he mean? Yeah.
> **J:** He said, "In art, once I see something // I can draw it however I want to draw it." // I said, (John lowers his voice toward whispering, greater intensity, coming forward back to his desk, looking at me more intently) "Do you ever do that in math? Do you ever do that in spelling? Do ya . . . " (takes breath) // He said, "No. I never do that." I said, "Jacob, when you're reading social studies you should have your own little MTV video going on in your head." // He says, "Yeah, I could do that." (**D:** Hmm, amazing.) "So, help me out tonight. Go home, and ah, when you are reading, picture everything you are reading with your invisible hands." And he came back and he said, "You know Mr. *****, that battle they were talking about? There was seven-hundred and fifty men on horseback. Can you imagine seven-hundred and fifty horses?" // All of a sudden it took a whole new meaning for him that he didn't even know, it was a strength he had, and it just, it made a world of difference for him. And, it was a strength that he had that I didn't know he had. // He knew he had it, but didn't know to utilize it in the classroom, spelling became,
> **D:** (interrupting) He just took off with that?
> **J:** Yeah. Yeah.
> **D:** Oh.
> **J:** So, // so that was just neat. And that was exciting. And, // he didn't struggle so hard in Social Studies. It was fun to read Social Studies. He got better scores in it. So, and that was an intelligence that he had (**D:** Yes.) that he wasn't taping into, I wasn't taping into. (1-1-120)

John latched onto Jacob's "mental hands" beautifully, realized their significance for Jacob, and then to put them to use in facilitating Jacob's school learning. Throughout the seventh grade John hadn't seen Jacob as precisely as he described above, and had never before really thought through specific aspects of Jacob's unique inner 'already developed' capacities and the ways it could be expressed and utilized in the service of better learning. In the past, John had

been working to motivate Jacob, supporting him to overcome his hesitation with genuine feeling for him as a person, like he worked with the kids in the pool. He knew of his artistic talent, but this knowledge didn't seem to be enough for John to really help Jacob to learn better in school. Caring, wanting to help, feeling compassion for the other, and excelling in life were major inner forces in John that exuded from his inner sense of fulfillment; they pervaded every part of him, composed a certain fulness of presence in his teaching, and helped to guide moment-to-moment direction and choice in his classroom work and in working toward friendship with his students. John knew himself this way and taught his classes in the way he learned best up to this time -- he practiced and did the best he could. When Jacob told John about his "mental hands," there was a transformational effect deepening, expanding, enhancing, and refocusing all that John knew about teaching.

Jacob became a much larger person than John knew or expected. John's realization of the fact that Jacob had a deeper fuller inner life with untapped strengths, resources, and capabilities enriched and deepened John's vision of children, himself, his teaching, and his larger life, bringing about greater clarity and meaning in his compassion, caring, and motivation to excel. There exist a permanence and reality to John's new knowledge that integrates so fully, so completely, so perfectly into what was there before, that fundamental transformation occurred, not giving up the old for the new, but like an inner alignment of lenses that allow for greater and clearer magnification of his vision and intelligence. John saw instantly that Jacob's "mental hands" was a jewel that glistened with its own inner light, a portal into the mind of a larger, utterly complex, deeper human being.

John remains awed and humbled. Jacob's talking about his "mental hands" was so incredibly insightful to John that it pulled together some of the mystery of Jacob's difficulties in learning to a new level of understanding, and became part of the feelings of empowerment that were now also shaping up in John.

The changes that occurred with Jacob were also so powerful that Jacob's parents noticed the difference. John talked to his parents about the improvements in Jacob's schoolwork and the work John had done with him. Jacob's mother, with tears of joy in her eyes, told John, "Do you realize this is going to change his whole life?" With improved classroom performance Jacob felt greater self-esteem and became more secure in his interactions with his peers.

John now sees his work as a teacher in terms of a much broader and deeper perspective -- every child has strengths which can be nourished to bring about more individual success and happiness. John's ability to empathize and express compassion expanded into new dimensions and now aims to reach into the mind of the learner to unlock, switch on, or in some way bring to mutual consciousness (between John and the student) hidden strengths and talents in the service of better learning.

"How Something Like This Can Affect Their Whole Life"

Both John's teaching swimming and his work with Jacob highlights an expanding realization which has served to clarify and amplify John's compassion and his capacity to help others learn. His fulfillment went along with a snowballing effect of his inner intelligence/awareness as it spread simultaneously to his thinking about his career, his sensitivity to his family, and to his reflections on the course of his life. It seems as well that the universe

has been cooperating. Occurring about midway in the third interview, the distillation process that is John's story of growth became more visible and reached new more comprehensive heights and clarity in the context of the co-investigative nature of this research.

John had just finished describing to me a "cause-effect analysis" he did with Cody (not his real name) concerning how Cody felt when he got poor grades in relation to the consequences for him at home and with his friends, and what the consequences and associated feelings might be if he received good grades.

> *(d)* **D:** . . . When you're working with Cody like this, is he ah is there, now the aim seems to be, "Do you want to bring some of this to his awareness, (**J:** Um-huh, sure.) and yours too, (**J:** Sure. Yea.) for that matter?" Okay.
> **J:** That's exactly the aim (with sureness). (**D:** Okay) I need to learn, // I need to learn how he learns. // So I can tell him how he learns (slight laugh), (then directly and securely) so he knows how to learn. (**D:** Yes. Okay.) And once he can do that, // then he's very independent. Then he no longer needs // a teacher. Then he can be his own teacher.
> **D:** Okay. Is this a, in the, in your, ah, tie this, connect this up maybe with what you said in the past, how, how this was a new experience for you, working with I.D.E.A.L. (**J:** Um-huh.) And this working, I guess this working with I.D.E.A.L., it was working with individual students in this way. // Doing this. (**J:** Um-huh.) . . . Was this like a, when you're working with children in this way, was this kind of a sudden, ah, to bring out <kind of> a sudden shift in the way you see children as learners, or (**J:** Yeah, ahhh. (stretched out, like saying it while leaning back, getting ready to reflect).), maybe, maybe it was more of a, more of a gradual building or something on something you had done in the past?
> **J:** I // it was a, it was a sudden awareness of //10__ It was a sudden awareness of how // Let me think about this // Uhm //9__ How something like this //3_ <I mean> can affect their whole life. //3.5_ Uhm //3.8_ maybe it was a sudden realization // of the importance of my job. //4_ Ahm, // there's some students, that I, I mean, it was, // some of these things they learn about themselves // (now speaking quickly) will have an impact on them the rest of their lives. And, //3.5_ when I realized that I could help kids // like that, that's when I realized that, man, I need to be working with // more than // four kids in a classroom. (Spoken quickly) That's when I need to try to work with / with more and more, and get to my whole class. Ahm // but the, the learning process, / ´my own learning process, // and how to utilize all these tools, it was, <what?>, it was probably a three year process for me. It really wasn't overnight. (3-1-304)

What John says here is beautiful. He reached in himself to pull everything that has been happening with him over the last few years together into a formulation of unity right before my eyes! His commitment, vision, dedication, and compassion became completely open, spoken directly from the heart.

John distinguished what had a sudden impact on him and his awareness of the deeper meaning of his work from the more gradual development of a finer tuning of his own learning as a teacher with new tools coming from his participation in the I.D.E.A.L. Program. He realized how his compassion, now fused with a "compassion for them as learners," can really affect somebody in a good way, how his working with them, touching them with deeper compassion, can "have an impact" on their whole life. The way John was working formed a larger unity around the core of good feeling/fulfilment, and in turn amplified his fulfillment, like more lenses lining up to see more and more reality, at the same time allowing more and more inner light and feeling to come forth enhancing the vision and his capability to work with others. The empowerment that John expressed in the above passage did not refer to a set of strategies he could use to effect change in others. Rather, his empowerment had to do with increased capacity to express his inner potentiality for good feeling/fulfilment in the service of (in the sense of collaborating with) bringing inner strength and potentiality to mutual awareness! There is then a greater sense of John's work becoming more a mission, more like a self-sustaining distillation of devotion to higher realms of Self.

The inner unity in John's consciousness, his sense of becoming fulfilled, informs him about the importance of this job in the education of children. Located firmly in the meaning of John's life, the unity we are coming to know was further clarified as it was spoken. When John

said, "How something like this //3_ <I mean> can affect their whole life," John de-emphasized himself and referred to a whole process that he was becoming more able to mediate in order to bring forth fruit (new awareness of inner strengths of students for better learning). His recognition of his role as a mediator in children and others learning more about themselves, his being in that role, unified with that, being he in concert with the other, is the meaning. John relished and became exhilarated by immersion into the active collaborative process that also allowed the child or student to come into that process with him. Further, in mediating collaborative learning/growth of awareness, John was going with the distillation of himself in relation to the other, open to letting things happen at the same time as he was gaining greater control of the learning/growth process.

John is now deeply in the midst of, and more in control of, an educational process which assists in bringing about transformations in people's lives to further unleash individual potential. John gives himself to the other, identifying with the inner state of the child, "I need to learn how he learns." His compassion and caring are being honed, and his growing recognition that sharpening and distillation have in fact taken place is bringing into existence an expanding capacity to mediate a more empowering educational process. The power to do this is drawn from within the more unified and deeper meaning now pervading John's life, felt as a purer experience of unity, purpose, and fulfillment.

Brief Commentary on the Essence of the Story of Growth of John

From the above growth story about John, one can see that it is composed of three major aspects or elements which were used to characterize more than twenty years of John's growth in

his life. First is his realization in the swimming pool that he wanted to be the teacher and help children get over their fears and the transformation that realization had on his life. He stopped being a jerk, he came to appreciate his high school teachers for what they were trying to do, he became a model student, he continued to teach swimming and being a lifeguard as well as managing the swimming pool through college, and he never wavered in his desire to be a teacher. Second, the experience in the pool and his progressive living in tune with fulfillment became a direction to go with his life which sustained him even in difficult times with difficult students and unknown job prospects. Third, his experience with Jacob opened John to the inner world of the child which had a phenomenal effect on John's ability to really help his students. These aspects, along with the increasing awareness by John concerning how his new understandings of himself and learning can affect a student's whole life, cohere as a unity of deep feeling and fulfillment. John's growth is

> . . . a progressive "self-distillation" (subliminally but not necessarily deliberate or completely conscious), in which the original combination of "[inner reality/motivation/state of] compassion for the children's condition and fulfillment by helping them" became clarified, distilled and expanded into something like a pervasive "state of being." (Witz, et al., 1998, p. 28)

Conclusion

What has been accomplished in the case of John and what is the larger potential for the approach? (1) John recognized himself in the portrait, was pleased with the result, and communicated to Goodwin that the nuances were right and in the right proportions. This meant that a true portrait had been drawn which at the same time presented with rigor and adherence to

the interview data a new paradigm of self-realization. (2) Seeing the phenomenon of growth as the unique whole it actually is in John's life naturally deepens and enriches any discussion of teacher renewal and "self-transcendence" in education, like Goodlad (1997), for example. (3) The analytical process of developing one's understanding to the point of writing a detailed portrait such as John's brings the investigator closer to his or her own inner development, challenges stereotypy, and zeros in on what is really important. (4) There develops the potential for the investigator to have at his or her command better direction and inner coherence in moment-to-moment decision making while planning and executing further research, while teaching, and while working directly with pre-service and in-service teachers.

If educators are going to research the lives of teachers to inform and inspire educational improvement, then further study at the level of detail sketched here needs to be undertaken to further illuminate the nature of what it is to fundamentally grow and change. The approach here enables the pursuit of understanding at depths which do more than confirm or inform our own stereotypes and can bring about new knowledge and comprehensive growth in the researcher. Goodwin (1998) has shown that each of his participants represents a separate paradigm in the study of the nature of teacher growth and there is no indication that the possibilities have been exhausted.

Key For Reading Transcribed Passages

The symbols below and their meaning used in the passages quoted in the text of this research were adapted in whole, with only minor changes, from Witz (1985).

D: David Goodwin.

J: John.

// Inserted where there is a "noticeable pause" in the flow of the talking of a duration of approximately 3/4 to 2 seconds.

//3__ Indicates a pause where the approximate number of seconds is beyond two, plus or minus ½ second, so that, //4.5__ for example, would indicate a pause of 4 and ½ seconds.

/ Inserted when there is a noticeable change in the "prosodic flow" of the talking, like a shift in intensity or a noticeable raising, lowering, or speed of the voice.

´ Indicates that stress has been placed on a particular syllable or word.

< > This encloses a phrase that has been said very fast and usually at a lower volume. For example when someone says, "<you know>" at the beginning or end of a sentence. These can be seen as throw away phrases habitually used in discourse.

[ ] Inserted to supply additional information on material which "has been presupposed" in the dialogue, or "intended referents" which may be unclear because of the way the dialogue has been selected for analysis.

( ) Standard parentheses are used to supply the reader with additional information to help gain a better comprehension of what is going on in text of the dialogue or passage.

(1-1-015) Numbers within parentheses, for example (2-1-325), at the end of a quoted passage refer to the number of the interview, first, second, etc., side 1 or side 2 of the 45 minute cassette tape, and the number on the tape counter, always starting at zero for each side of the cassette tape, respectively.

, The comma is used with all its usual meaning in Standard English, indicating brief pauses, or changes in the flow of the talking, etc. The comma is also used to separate the repeating of words, common in ordinary speech during recollection and during the formulation of thoughts, like, "The, the first time I saw him . . . "

" " In the text of the portrait, words or phrases in quotations are words actually used by the subject during the interview.

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